NOTES FROM THE WEATHER BUREAU LIBRARY.

By C. FITZHUGH TALMAN, Librarian.

THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR MASCART.

These notes (March, 1908, p. 71) recently contained a brief notice of the affecting scene at Poissy, on September 12, 1907, when Professor Mascart took leave of his colleagues of the International Meteorological Committee, over which he had presided for fourteen years. His health had been declining for some time, and he was not strong enough to make the short journey to Paris, where the regular sessions of the committee were held. Now comes the sad news of the death of this distinguished meteorologist and physicist on August 26, 1908, at the age of 71.

Nature (London) of September 10 contains a comprehensive account of Professor Mascart's scientific career, while a somewhat more intimate sketch of his life and character appears in La Nature (Paris) of September 12.

Éleuthère Élie Nicolas Mascart was born at Quarouble, near Valenciennes, February 20, 1837. He was graduated from the École Normale Supérieure, taught physics for several years, and in 1878, when the meteorological service of France was separated from the astronomical observatory, he became the first director of the independent service—the Bureau Central Météorologique. He retired from the directorship January 1, 1907, and was succeeded by Professor Angot.

The branches of physics, besides meteorology, in which Professor Mascart was especially interested were electricity and optics, and his most notable contributions to meteorology related to atmospheric electricity and atmospheric optics. His "Traité d'optique" has, in fact, been the principal reference book on meteorological optics down to the very recent appearance of the (still incomplete) "Meteorologische Optik" of Pernter.

TRAVELS OF AN AUSTRALIAN METEOROLOGIST.

Mr. H. A. Hunt, Commonwealth Meteorologist of Australia, who has been despatched by his government upon a tour of investigation of the principal meteorological services of the world, recently arrived in America by way of the Pacific, visited some of the western coast stations of the U. S. Weather Bureau and of the Meteorological Service of Canada, the headquarters of the latter service at Toronto, and the Central Office of the Weather Bureau at Washington, where he spent ten days early in September. He also visited the Research Observatory of the Weather Bureau at Mount Weather, Va. Mr. Hunt sailed from New York September 17 for Hamburg, to visit the Deutsche Seewarte and take part in the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the German Meteorological Society.

The Commonwealth Meteorological Bureau of Australia has but recently been formed, thru the amalgamation of the several state services of that country (see MONTHLY WEATHER REVIEW, May, 1907, p. 2 8). The founding of this national service was somewhat analogous to, and nearly contemporary with, the organization of the new Public Weather Service of Germany. It is interesting to note that in both cases the governments concerned sent representatives abroad to glean ideas and suggestions from the experiences of the meteorological bureaux of foreign countries. Germany sent Doctor Polis, of Aachen, to America for this purpose in the autumn of 1907.

BULLETINS OF THE AUSTRALIAN METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE.

Almost coincidently with Mr. Hunt's arrival in America the post brought us his "Climate and meteorology of Australia," which was issued in March, 1908, as Bulletin No. 1 of the new Commonwealth Bureau. It is reprinted from the 1901–1907 "Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia," with the correction, however, of the numerous typographical errors that slipped thru the press in the earlier publication. This is a compact little account of Australian climate and weather, based on observations down to and including 1906, special attention being given to the meteorology of the state capitals.

Bulletin No. 2 of the same bureau, issued July, 1908, is entitled "Rainfall map of the Commonwealth of Australia," and is also by Mr. Hunt. Besides eleven pages of text it comprises a large chart of the mean annual rainfall of Australia and Tasmania, based on the records of nearly 700 stations for the decade 1897–1906. One object of this publication is stated to be "to dispel many of the erroneous impressions that are current respecting the rainfall of Australia and Tasmania." The author says:

> When compared with other continents the quantities and distribution of rainfalls over Australia are not so unfavorable as is generally supposed. * * * Comparing the rainfalls of the chief cities of the rest of the world with those of Australia, we find that Bombay, Calcutta, Colombo, Singapore, and Hongkong are the only places out of a list of 42 that exceed the totals of Sydney and Brisbane. Perth has a greater annual rainfall than New York, and more than that of 28 other cities of the 42. Hobart nearly equals London, which Melbourne exceeds by an inch. Eleven of the 42 cities mentioned have less rain than Hobart.

METEOROLOGY AT THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

At the Dublin meeting of the British Association, which opened September 2, 1908, the Mathematical and Physical Section was presided over by Dr. W. N. Shaw, Director of the British Meteorological Office. Doctor Shaw's presidential address, which is published in Nature of September 3, 1908, is of interest to all meteorologists. In reviewing the work of the Meteorological Office the director calls attention to the fact that arrears in the publication of data are being rapidly made up, so that by the end of this year "six weeks will be the full measure of the interval between observation and publication in all departments." He also makes the interesting announcement that on July 1, 1908, the morning hour of observation at 27 out of the 29 telegraphic stations in the British Isles was changed from 8 a. m. to 7 a. m., so that there is now a strictly synchronous system of observations for western and central Europe. Dealing with the question of the economical administration of his office, and the perennial demand for tangible "results," Doctor Shaw borrows his metaphors from "The Merchant of Venice" and shows how the demands of the scientific Shylocks are frequently met with the news that some unpromising argosy of investigation that started on its voyage long ago "hath richly come to harbor suddenly." Several recent discoveries of British meteorologists are cited in illustration, one of the most interesting being that of the semidiurnal variation in the velocity of the southeast trade wind, corresponding to the semidiurnal variation of barometric pressure. This discovery is the result of a recent elaboration of anemometric observations at St. Helena dating from 1891.

At the same meeting was held an important discussion on the isothermal layer of the atmosphere, an abstract of which will be published in a later number of the REVIEW.

THE WEATHER OF THE MONTH.

By Mr. P. C. DAY, Acting Chief, Climatological Division.

PRESSURE AND WINDS.

The distribution of mean atmospheric pressure for August, 1908, over the United States and Canada, is graphically shown on Chart VI, and the average values and departures from the normal are shown for each station in Tables I and III.

Nearly normal pressure prevailed during the month over the entire area of the United States and Canada. Over the districts from the Mississippi Valley eastward to the Atlantic the average pressure was slightly above 30.00 inches, while on the Pacific slope it ranged from about 29.90 over the southern